

Use the right mower for your type of lawn

April showers bring May flowers and that means hard work for the garden enthusiast. However, the amount of work necessary to achieve a successful lawn and garden depends on the quality of equipment used.

Type and size of a lot determines what garden equipment enthusiasts will need this spring, says specialist, Henk Van Meijel.

"The first thing I ask people is if their lot is hilly or flat, does it have a lot of flower beds, and how large is it?" Mr. Van Meijel said.

Mr. Van Meijel owns Henk's Lawn and Garden in Stewarttown which specializes in the sale and service of lawn, garden and small industrial equipment.

According to Mr. Van Meijel, people who own a lot less than a quarter of an acre in size require nothing more sophisticated than a quality power mower. For those adverse to pushing, they can purchase a self-propelled lawn mower. The operator is required to stand behind the machine and guide it while the mower does the rest of the work.

Mr. Van Meijel recommends this type of mower to small plot owners if the terrain is hilly and to those whose property is half an acre or larger.

The Cadillac of lawn mowing

Mulching mowers regain popularity

For many homeowners, the most difficult part about mowing the lawn is the clippings. What do you do with the clippings?

According to experts at Bolens Corporation, the best answer may also be the easiest. Put them back into the earth with a mulching mower!

That's what independent university studies show. Agronomists point out that mulching results in a generally greener and healthier lawn, because nutrients are returned to the soil.

Mulch particles decompose and are absorbed by the grass root system within 14 days. Mulch allows evaporation at the soil level without adding to thatch buildup.

Mulching mowers, first introduced decades ago, are again popular because many of today's models are ideally suited to meet the demands of today's homeowner.

According to Bolens, a lawn mower

equipment is the tractor riding mowers which range in price from \$1,500 to \$5,000. The most advanced of these models, with the appropriate attachments, can easily be adapted to clearing leaves and shovelling snow, Mr. Van Meijel said.

Line trimmers, tillers and leaf blowers are some of the other types of equipment Henk's carries. Mr. Van Meijel says he sells only quality equipment.

Fifty per cent of his business is with landscaping companies. "We sell equipment that will last between 10 and 15 years," he said.

Henk's also services equipment. However with regards to both sales and repairs, Mr. Van Meijel said he only deals with equipment suitable for four acre lots or smaller.

To properly start off the upcoming gardening season, Mr. Van Meijel says people need a mower and line trimmer at the least. A trimmer is used to groom lawn edges, Mr. Van Meijel said.

Mr. Van Meijel is from Holland and spent his early childhood and youth working on his parents' farm. He immigrated to Canada in 1977, and has been in the garden equipment business for the last 10 years, eight of which he has owned Henk's here in Georgetown.

designed for mulching must have a deep mowing deck and use a specially engineered multi-pitch blade.

The blade and deck combine to create air suction to hold grass upright and, once cut, to suspend the clippings in the mower chamber while repeatedly chopping them into finer particles.

These small particles are then blown deep into the turf, near the soil level, where they decompose quickly.

A conventional side discharge mower, on the other hand, blows clippings horizontally onto the lawn rather than forcing them down into the turf.

The long clippings lie on the lawn surface in unsightly brown clumps, and this layer of dead clippings can sometimes become thick enough to exclude sunlight and cause yellowing and weakening of the turf.

Homeowners also can bag the clippings, but it generally takes 40 to 50 per cent more mowing time to empty the bags and dispose of clippings.

Make the most of a small lot

ENGLEHART —Think your lot is too small for a vegetable garden?

Well, by landscaping with vegetables as well as flowers, you can make the most of today's small city lots, says Master Gardener Bonnie Warner of RR 3, Englehart, Ont.

Master Gardeners are gardening enthusiasts who have received formal horticultural training through the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food's Master Gardener program. Once trained, Master Gardeners are available to answer questions from the public.

Try planting a border of leaf lettuce and marigolds around your foundation plantings or grow tomatoes on a trellis to separate two areas.

"Planning is an important part of landscaping with vegetables. You must consider such things as colour, growth habit, the time when each variety looks its best and appearance after harvest," she said.

Cabbage, for example, is an effective accent plant until the first head is harvested. Once the head has been cut, the remaining leaves become an eyesore.

At this point, perhaps you could replace the cabbage with small pots of marigolds, petunias or geraniums.

Location of the vegetables is of prime importance too.

Full sunlight, adequate water, proper fertilization and good soil are important if your vegetables and flowers are to thrive, she said.

"Certain vegetables also require a regular spray program, so you must find out if the spray will adversely affect neighbouring flowers (or vice versa)," she said.

For instance, if you plant vegetables around your rose bushes, check to see if the chemical used on the roses will harm your vegetables. And note if there is a time interval required between the last spray and harvest time, so that the vegetables are not sprayed too close to consumption.

"One advantage of planting vegetables in your flower garden is the unique effect that can be created by combining new colours, forms and textures," she said.

Parsley, with its dark green colour and ruffled texture, is a good choice for your border.

Parsley is usually late to start from seed in the spring but it is very effective

if you plant the seeds with spring bulbs in the fall. By late June, when the bulbs have finished flowering, the parsley will be fully grown and will hide the

bulbs' unsightly foliage. Asparagus, which is a perennial, makes an attractive delicate background in a perennial garden.

"But it is important to remember that asparagus needs about four to five years before you can begin to harvest the tender young shoots," she said.

Tomatoes may be used in several ways in a budget-wise landscape.

Miniature or cherry types can be used in patio pots or as a border plant.

Larger varieties can be trained to grow on a trellis for an effective backdrop to the rest of the garden.

Best of all, the tomatoes can be harvested and the plant will still be an attractive part of the landscape.

The globe artichoke, with its unusual head and thistle-like flowers, makes an interesting accent plant.

The heads may be cooked like asparagus or sometimes eaten raw.

Kale and borecole (with its finely curled dark leaves) can be used as an accent or border plant.

The tender leaves of borecole can be used as boiled greens, chopped for salads or used like lettuce in a sand-

wich. Brussel sprouts also make a good accent plant in a flower garden. And after harvesting the sprouts late in the summer, the plant still looks attractive in the landscape.

Herbs—tarragon, dill, sage—may be used as background materials or accent plants. Ornamental basil, with its dark purple leaves and lavender-white blooms, is an interesting contrast plant.

Chives, with its long narrow grass-like leaves and mauve-pink flowers, is ideal in a border.

Swiss chard may also be used as border material. Or try green and red peppers; the shiny leaves and fruit of the pepper will add a unique texture to your landscape.

Other vegetables are more difficult, although not impossible, to use in a landscape.

Sprawling plants, such as pumpkin, squash, and beans should be avoided, except under certain circumstances.

Rhubarb can be used as background material, but it dies down in late summer, limiting its use.

Air cleaners can work

—It's virtually inarguable today that the air we breathe, even outdoors, is a chemical soup, especially in our larger cities. Automobile exhaust, factory smoke, pollen, spores, insecticides, and pesticides are but a few of the contaminants with which our lungs and bodies must contend.

Bill Curry is a Marketing Communications Manager with ICG, Canada's largest manufacturer of heating and cooling equipment. He sends us this information about ICG's Puralizer Electronic Air Cleaner. This model will stop:

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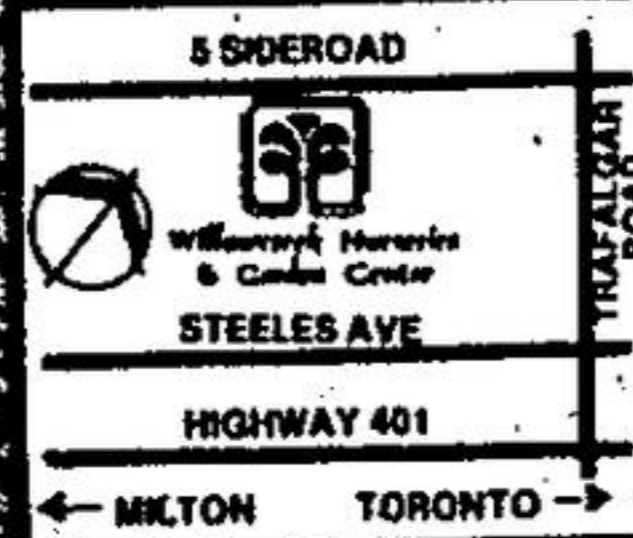
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